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FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 1801.

INTERNAL ECONOMY OF DRURY-LANE
THEATRE.

(Continued from page 210.)

AT the desire of all the Parties, except Mr. Grubb, the final decision of the business of Drury-Lane Theatre is put off till Saturday Se'nnight. The Counsel for Messrs. Ford and Hammersley, on one side, and for Mr. Sheridan on the other, said, that considerable progress had already been made towards an amicable arrangement, which would certainly be completed in a few days. Mr. Agar for Mr. Grubb objected to delay, as it would tend every day to increase the embarrassments, affecting the Theatre, and thus add to the inconvenience of Mr. Grubb's situation, already so very unpleasant. Mr. Mansfield, Counsel for Mr. Hammersley, said, that he did not perfectly understand the

Vol. V.

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nature

nature of Mr. Grubb's interest in the Theatre, but he should suppose, that whatever was for the interest of the concern in general, must be for his interest also. The affair was ordered to stand over to Saturday Se'nnight, being a day after the the First Seal.

(To be continued.)

FOLLY AS IT FLIES.

In the view of clearing off, as far as practicable, our long out-standing *arrears*, and to bring up our Report as nearly as possible to the transactions of the present week, we have been induced to postpone the insertion of the *Weekly Catalogue* till our next. Several articles of secondary moment and importance, have likewise, as the Reader will perceive, been passed over for the same reason—it being our wish to complete our account of *Mr. Reynold's New Comedy*, in the first instance, and secondly to give an adequate Report of the *Duenna*—For this purpose, therefore, we resume the continuation of our *Critique* on FOLLY AS IT FLIES, from our last.

Caractacus is the son of a Welsh Pedagogue, whose whim it was to give all his children *classical* names. He is compelled

pelled by difficulties, to exchange his situation, as Usher of a school, for a living, and enters into the service of *Sir Herbert*. But disliking the scene of dissipation, which he is compelled to witness, he quits his place—and is plunged into much distress, from which he is, however, happily relieved by encountering *Dr. Infallible*, in whom he recognizes his long-lost brother *Alcibiades*. The Doctor removes his immediate embarrassments, and equips him in one of his own suits of apparel—being too proud to suffer his brother to wear a livery.

To proceed now from the succinct analysis we have given of the plot, to a review of the general character of the New Comedy, we must, in candour, observe, that it surpasses in irregularity and extravagance even the former productions of the author. From the pen of *Mr. Reynolds* we look, indeed, rather for eccentricity and amusement, than for union of cause and effect, than for probability and nice design—and in this respect, it is but fair to add, the spectator cannot complain of disappointment. At the very moment, that his judgment disposes him to censure, he is surprised into an involuntary laugh, by the whimsicality of those very absurdities, which he seems inclined to condemn. *Mr. Reynolds*, as a theatrical writer, is not to be tried by common rules. He aspires not to the praise of legitimate dramatic composition—but avails himself of the stage merely for temporary purposes. He seeks not *posthumous renown* but *present profit*—he wishes not to live to the latest posterity; but to live well, during his own circumscribed span of existence. In this view, he seizes on the prominent features of the day—arrests the fleeting minutes, and to adopt the title of his New Comedy “shoot Folly, as it flies.” and chooses for his game, the manners living, as they rise.”

Viewing, therefore, his productions in their true and proper light, as mere *ephemerals*, avowedly intended for the amusement of the transient hour, we feel disposed, to grant indulgence to his irregularities, which come indeed within the very scope and aim of his object, which is to surprise and entertain. The *eccentricities* of *Tom Tick*, however improbable and extravagant, in themselves, and however, they may outrage our judgment, in the perusal, please us notwithstanding in the representation. Sober criticism, indeed will allow, that the *traits* of *Ticks* character appertain more properly to *Farce* than to *Comedy*. A man running in debt, with some scores of tradesmen, money-lenders &c. not one of whom has any knowledge of his person—obtaining credit with bankers, by making them presents of *Leicestershire pigs*—and so troublesome to his Landlord, by the continual crowd of duns, that pester him for payment of his debts, that the landlord, at last, gives him *Twelve Pounds* to get rid of him—such a character is most unquestionably not in the ordinary course of nature and experience. Yet its very faults constitute, if we may be allowed the paradox, its recommendations—Aided by the irresistible gaiety and sprightliness of *Mr. Lewis*, it causes reflection to run riot, and forces us to relax the austerity of our features by involuntary smiles.

Dr. Infallible is another *outré* character, though it possesses the merit of serving as the vehicle to much just and pointed satire on the quacks and empirics of the day. Common report, or rather the general suffrage, founded on the fitness of the allusion, has assigned its application to one of the most notorious of that odious race, who, by dint of impudence and callous feeling, practise on the credulity of the public, and acquire fortunes, by propagating disease and death among the community. 'Tis however, not a little singular

singular, that *Caractacus Shenkin*, should not recognise him for his long-lost brother *Alcibiades*, till nearly the termination of the Piece.

Caractacus is himself amenable to criticism, on the ground of just and natural delineation. He blends however, so much goodness of heart with his simplicity—so much shrewdness with rusticity that we readily pardon his inconsistencies, and view him with a favouring eye.

Peter Post-Obit, as a systematic legacy-hunter, pushes the *outré* to a still greater extreme. The facility, with which he is cajoled, to transfer his guardianship of *Georgiana* to *Tick* as an equivalent for the reversion of his large fortune and possessions—as well as the ease with which he is duped into an undertaking for the payment of *Ticks* debts, in the Spunging-house, exceed all human probability. Such a character is but barely passable in the very broadest species of Farce.

On the whole, then we may justly say, that Mr. Reynolds's New Comedy is rather a pleasing jumble of heterogeneous materials, than a regular and connected production. The pathetic scenes are frequently interesting, but accord not with the general tenor of the piece. In some cases he verges too closely on the tragic department.

To the Performers, the Author is eminently indebted. In the serious walk Mr. Murray, as *Sir Herbert*, and Mr. H. Johnston, as *Leonard*, did ample justice to the piece. The latter, as the representative of a young and gallant naval officer appeared to uncommon advantage. Mr. Johnston has a frank and ingenuous countenance, attempered with a look of manly energy and boldness, which qualify him in a high degree for the part. Mr. Whitfield, always correct and respectable, imparted to the character of *Malcour* all the interest of which it is susceptible. But the part is not sufficiently

sufficiently prominent, in itself to afford scope to an imposing display of talent.

At the excellence of *Mr. Lewis*, and *Mr. Munden*, in the respective parts of *Tom Tick*, and *Peter Post-Obit*, we have already glanced. The invincible gaiety of the former, and the irresistible drollery of the latter, are equally entitled to praise. *Mr. Knight's Shenkin*, is an admirable performance, and commands applause. It affords us unfeigned pleasure, that the merits of *Mr. Simmons* begins to be recognized, and more prominently, than heretofore, called forth into action. *Dr. Infallible* is, in his hand, a very humorous and entertaining personage. Indeed the style in which he acquits himself in this character, is worthy of his *Beau Mordecai*, in *Love-a-la-Mode*, on which we have already commented, and proves him qualified to move in a superior walk than he has been accustomed.

Lady Melmoth, in our opinion, is not the most appropriate character for *Miss Murray's* peculiar bent of talents. 'Tis in scenes of simple *pathos* and unsophisticated nature, that this Actress principally excels. As the representative, therefore, of a fashionable lady, she does not meet our entire approbation of the character. In the latter scenes, however, where *Lady Melmoth* sees and acknowledges her error, and evinces her remorse at the thoughtless career she has been pursuing, she puts in a fair claim to our approbation.

Mrs. Gibbs, sustains the part of *Georgiana*, with adequate interest and feeling; but we should have preferred an exchange of the two characters—*Georgiana* coming more properly within *Miss Murray's* sphere—and *Lady Melmoth* being more congenial to the cast of *Mrs. Gibbs*. This suggestion, however, is not meant to convey the slightest detraction on the merits of the two performers alluded to—whose claims no one can be more ready to acknowledge and respect than ourselves.

Mr.

Mr. Betterton spoke the Prologue, which, as well for its own intrinsic worth, as for the impression it makes, might as well be omitted. The Epilogue is of very different description: It is a humourous, though we admit it at the same time, to be a very incongruous composition, and was delivered by Mr. Munden, with peculiar archness and effect. For the gratification of our readers, we subjoin a copy.

EPILOGUE.

SPOKEN BY MR. MUNDEN.

“Eye Nature’s walks”—need Poets thus advise?—
 Pray who can miss, except they shut their eyes?
 And just pure Nature I expose to view—
 Transparent Fair Ones, I appeal to you.
 To you, ye Youths, I use a different feature—
 Ye modern Beaux are surely out of Nature.
 “*Shoot Folly as it flies,*” alas! in vain
 Your Bard has often tried again! again!
 His Game Certificate each year has got,
 And wasted all his Powder, Paper, Shot;
 Though so much Game about this motley Town,
 He tries in vain, alas! to bring them down;
 And if ye wish to know the reason why,
 Follies, he says, on Fashion’s pinions fly,
 Though with good aim at these you eager fire,
 Suppose you hit them, still they fly the high’r;
 What! can no birds in this fam’d place be found?
 Egad I’ll try—sure this is *Sporting Ground*,
 Husbands and Wives, Cyprians, and Lobby Phantoms,
 Are Cuckoos, Game-Cocks, Owls, and crowing Bantams.
 The City Dames have surely got a trimming,
 And all the *Lame-Ducks* in canals are swimming,
 “To catch the living manners as they rise!”
 And is not this a *field for exercise*?
 Suppose a tragic scene—begin with high woe—
 Sir, who am I? Why, pray, Sir, how should I know?

Go on! Go on! Why all this bother?—
 Sir, I'm a Gentleman!—and I another,
 And must I lose my dearest, sweet, *Evander*?
 My names *M'Gosling*—and mine, Sir, is *O'Gander*;
 Drops for the Ladies! pray unlose the lockets;
 Search for her handkerchief—why *she's no pockets*.
 Proceed, proceed, go on there with the Play,
 Be quiet, friend, pray hear what I've to say—
 Hoot! Hoot! Mon, is the Manager in London!
 Sir, I'm no Manager; my name's MUNDEN.
 This dashing age so opposite is grown,
 Young men are old from toe up to the crown—
 But since all Europe's fell disputes now cease,
 And all are buried in a lasting Peace,
 Our merry Bard, his occupation's done,
 Down drops his belt and double-barrell'd gun;
 No more the game his laughing muse shall spring;
 Or shoot each glaring folly on the wing;
 No rest he seeks, or danger does he fear,
 Proud in your cause to be a Volunteer.

If the legitimate end and purport of an *Epilogue* be to send the audience home in a good humour, that purpose is most completely answered by this present production. On the dropping of the curtain, *Mr. Lewis* came forward, and announced the Comedy for repetition amidst bursts of applause—and *Folly as it Flies* has maintained its popularity with increasing success—a success at which we sincerely rejoice, as *Mr. Reynolds*, its author, is not only one of the most pleasant and agreeable, but at the same time, one of the best hearts, one of the best tempered, and best disposed beings in the creation. Long may he live to reap the fruits of his laudable exertions, and enjoy every private and domestic gratifications so congenial to his taste, and commensurate to his respectability and worth.

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THE DUENNA.

This Operatic Production of *Mr. Sheridan's* *Muse*, which justly ranks with the first on the list of dramatic excellence, has been got up at both houses, chiefly for the purpose of bringing *Mrs. Billington* forward, in a New Character, as the representative of *Clara*. It was originally performed on the Covent-Garden boards, in the year 1775, and 'tis a circumstance not a little singular and extraordinary, that the only two performers, still acting in the Opera, who had a cast in the original representation, *Messrs. Quick* and *Wewitzer*—the original *Isaac Mendoza* and *Lopez*—should now be attached to the Drury-Lane Company. So great was the success of the *Duenna*, on its first appearance, that it was performed no less than 65 nights during the season—and ran 30 nights the following year. We shall enter into a comparative review of the manner in which the Opera is cast and performed at the two rival Theatres—prefixing for this purpose, our remarks with a specification of the performance at both houses.

Cast of the *Duenna*, as represented at Covent-Garden.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

AT COVENT-GARDEN.

<i>Isaac the Jew,</i>	—	MR. FAWCETT.
<i>Don Ferome,</i>	—	MR. MUNDEN.
<i>Ferdinand,</i>	—	MR. JOHNSTONE.
<i>Antonio,</i>	—	MR. HILL.
<i>Father Paul,</i>	—	MR. TOWNSEND.
<i>Carlos,</i>	—	MR. INCLEDON.
<i>Duenna,</i>	—	MRS. DAVENPORT.
<i>Louisa,</i>	—	MRS. MARTYR.
<i>Clara,</i>	—	MRS. BILLINGTON.

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DRAMATIS

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

AT DRURY-LANE.

<i>Don Jerome,</i>	—	MR. SUETT.
<i>Ferdinand,</i>	—	MR. KELLY.
<i>Antonio,</i>	—	MR. DIGNUM.
<i>Carlos,</i>	—	MRS. MOUNTAIN.
<i>Isaac Mendoza,</i>	—	MR. QUICK.
(Being his First * regular Appearance on this Stage.)		
<i>Lopez,</i>	—	MR. WEWITZER.
<i>Lorenzo,</i>	—	MR. FISHER.
<i>Father Paul,</i>	—	MR. PALMER.
<i>Francis,</i>	—	MR. MADDOCKS.
<i>Clara,</i>	—	MRS. BILLINGTON.
<i>Louisa,</i>	—	MISS DE CAMP.
<i>Margaret, (the Duenna)</i>	—	MISS POPE.

In the possession of *Mr. Quick*, the original *Isaac Mendoza*, as we have already observed, Drury-Lane boasts a decided superiority over Covent-Garden. *Mr. Quick* is the true *cunning Isaac* of the author—he sustains the character with genuine humour, void of buffoonery and grimace—whereas, *Mr. Fawcett*, on the other hand, throws so much coarseness and vulgarity into the part, that it cannot fail to disgust every spectator of taste, and militates, *in toto*, from the conception of the author. With all his mean and dishonest propensities, *Isaac* is supposed to be conscious of his own complicated defects, and indeed, he expressly tells us, that so well he is aware of the sorry figure he must necessarily cut in a lady's eye, that he hardly dares to face his mistress, and trembles at the very idea of an

* *Mr. Quick* performed on the Drury-Lane boards, about twenty years since, for the benefit of *Miss Leak*.

an interview with her. Hence it becomes indispensable, that on his first appearance, he should display an adequate degree of self-abasement and timidity. By timidity, we do not mean real modesty; but that species of awkward bashfulness, which forms the characteristic of vulgar and uncultivated minds. But Mr. Fawcett makes his *entre* with his customary effrontery, and throughout the whole Opera, scarcely imparts the difference of a single shade to his performance. Sometimes he reminds us of his *Bobadel*—another time of his broad farce, in characters, like *Caleb Quotum*—the same his rabble, coarseness and vulgarity in *Isaac*, as in any of the parts above specified.

How widely, how essentially different the style and manner of Mr. Quick! discriminating between tameness and extravagance, he hits with happy aim, the just medium, and renders the character ludicrous, by its own inherent *traits*; not, like Mr. Fawcett, discovering the actor, and evidently labouring to divert the audience—but leaving the audience to be diverted by the portraiture held up to their view. This constitutes, in our humble opinion, a point of primary consideration and magnitude. The actor should never appear to say to the audience: “Let me amuse you”—but on the contrary should seem, as it on these occasions is in nature, unconscious that he is the first object of ridicule. This it is, which forms the leading distinction between Mr. Quick, and Mr. Fawcett, and gives the decided preference to the former.

Munden and Suett both mistake their parts, as the representatives of *Don Jerome*. The characteristic gravity of the Spaniards, does not admit of such coarseness and *grotesque* buffoonery, as they occasionally have recourse to. But in other respects there is much to applaud in their performance. It would be far better, however, if they would bear in mind *Hamlet's* advice to the players, in pre-

ference to their own *impromptu's*—and “speak no more than is set down for them”—for they are both of them but too apt for the sake of raising a laugh in the galleries, to interload the dialogue with conceits of their own, which are totally foreign to the context and spirit of the scene, and thereby injure the reputation of the author. We have frequently seen these gentlemen guilty of the grossest *anachronisms*, in point of customs and manners, by their incongruous redundancies. Let them consult the third act of *Hamlet*, where Shakspeare reads them an admirable lesson on this head.

Appear professionally in whatever they may, Johnstone *versus* Kelly is a very unequal match. Johnstone has a voice—Kelly has not—Johnstone can sing—Kelly cannot—Johnstone can act—Kelly not—Johnstone can deliver a sentence with propriety—Kelly cannot—Johnstone has a fine, manly figure, and a look of Hibernian virility, which gives his mistress the *earnest and assurance of her wishes!*—Not so Kelly—with these advantages in favour of Mr. Johnstone, no fair comparison can obtain between the two performers. As well might we measure the *Irish Giant* against a *Dwarf!*—*O'Brian*, against *My Lady Morgan!*

Yet in the present instance, with reference to the part Mr. Johnstone sustains in the *Duenna*, we must candidly confess, that he falls into a systematic error—an error, however, which carries its own apology along with it in the eyes of the Ladies—by giving to his delineation of *Ferdinand* the air, colouring and semblance of an *Irishman*. Faulty, however, as this practice is, 'tis infinitely preferable to the contrary extreme, in which Mr. Kelly flounders. *Ferdinand* is no *Hibernian*, 'tis true—but as little, nay still less, is he an *Italian*.

This, however, being an ungracious subject, we shall expatiate on it not longer, farther than by observing, that
Mr

Mr. Sheridan, from his special situation, has the *cast* and appointment of the *Dramatis Personæ*, 'tis to us matter of no small surprise, that he should himself be instrumental in derogating from the merit and attraction of his own Opera, by his allotment of the character of *Ferdinand*. To murder a part, for the sake of a Song or Two, is scarcely pardonable, were there even no other person to execute them, and were they well given by the finger. But were this plea does not obtain—where several of the *thirty shillings per week-men* could go through the part with not only equal, but absolutely greater credit, the offence assumes an aggravated hue, and, in the present instance, falls little short, on the part of Mr. Sheridan, of *literary suicide*!

Antonio is a mere singing character—and in this respect Mr. Hill and Mr. Dignum stand nearly on a *par*—but the former has a great and decided advantage in point of figure.

As far as exclusively relates to *voice*, who shall contest the palm with Mr. Incledon? But yet, possessing, perhaps, the finest pipe in the kingdom, he is deficient in the instinctive and elementary principles of taste. Here Mrs. Mountain meets him with superior pretensions. Far better should we be pleased with Mr. Incledon's *Carlos*, if he would give the beautiful air:

“ Had I a heart for falsehood fram'd” &c.

in his *natural voice*, instead of running into the *falsetto*, from which Mrs. Mountain, with great judgment, abstains, *in toto*. From the progressive improvement of this lady, we answer future excellence of a superlative cast.

Between the Drury-Lane *Lopez*, and the *doer* of that character at Covent-Garden, comparison is altogether inadmissible. Mr. Wewitzer the original *Lopez*, as we have already remarked, gives to the part a degree of significance, which it cannot claim as its inherent attribute.

Townsend

Townsend has the advantage of Mr. Palmer, as *Father Paul*, in as far as he excels him as a singer. Simmons's *lay-brother*, trifling as is the part, discovers much comic talent. The contrast between the *jolly priest*, and the *half-starved lay-brother*, is indeed, carried at Covent-Garden almost to the very extreme of the *grotesque*. But, perhaps some indulgence should be granted in this respect, in order to render the part which is so very short more marked and prominent. In the scenic department, Drury-Lane distances Covent-Garden most decidedly—The *recess* at Drury-Lane, into which the jolly friars retire, on the irruption of the *lay-brothers* is infinitely preferable to the shabby expedient of the *curtain* at Covent-Garden, which gives the interior of the Convent, the air and appearance of the ward of an Hospital.

There is such an essential difference between the style in which *Margaret* the antiquated *Duenna*, is played at the two houses, that it is difficult to bring them to a just standard of comparison. Mrs. Davenport has unquestionably great merit in performing the part—but we must freely confess, that we give the preference decidedly to Miss Pope. The *classical* delineation (tis with mature deliberation and express design that we make use of this term) which Miss Pope draws of the *Duenna*, pleases us infinitely more than the coarse portraiture of Mrs. Davenport. As neither of these Ladies can sing—the original air, with which *Margaret* entertains the *cunning Isaac* is omitted. In its stead, Miss Pope rings the changes on the first line of the well-known song:

“ Oh ! listen to the voice of love ”

and Mrs. Davenport *caricatures* most extravagantly the amorous ditty :

“ *Ma chere ami*, my charming Fair &c.”

But

But in our humble estimation, she carries the *grotesque* and ludicrous too far.

Miss De Camp's *Lucy* is not sufficiently tender, nor yet sufficiently refined—But if this be considered as any derogation from the general merit of this excellent actress, it must be admitted, that Mrs. Martyr comes in for her share and proportion of the same censure. The austerity of Spanish manners and Spanish education, requires a greater degree of reserve and timidity in the female character, even where they emancipate themselves from their trammels, and resign themselves to the ascendancy of Love.

* * * The conclusion of this article, embracing Mrs. Billington's *Clara*, in our next.

NB. After having postponed our Publication for the express purpose of giving an account of the *Gamester*, it is with regret that we find ourselves compelled, by the limited extent of our work, to defer our *Critique* on this Tragedy, in which MR. BROWNE, made his *debut* in the character of *Beverly*, and MR. COOKE appeared, for the first time, in the part of *Stukely*, till our next. The extraordinary merit of MR. BROWNE's acting demands a full and circumstantial *Report*. To comprize our remarks on a subject of such primary importance, to a single page, would be doing the highest injustice to his distinguished merit and acknowledged excellence. In our next, therefore, we shall enter at large into the investigation of his claims.

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